

ORATION.



FELLOW SOLDIERS OF THE FAYETTEVILLE

INDEPENDENT COMPANY OF LIGHT INFANTRY:

Time, in his sure and steady passage, has brought around your Fiftieth Birth-Day. The invitation to appear as your representative on this interesting occasion, was as unexpected to me, as it is highly gratifying and complimentary. Diffidence of my ability to fulfil your wishes, to satisfy myself, to compensate this large and respected audience for their polite attendance, the pressure of the cares of business, and unaccustomed as I have been to appear on such occasions, should have compelled me perhaps to have declined the performance of your request, and the grateful task of pronouncing this Address had been better charged on an abler arm.

But, Fellow Soldiers, your invitation was one I knew not how to decline, though convinced it required the skill of a master hand to touch the various chords of feeling which, this day, vibrate in your bosoms and throughout our town; yet I well believed, that in the kindness and partiality which prompted the unanimous solicitation of your Committee to me, I should find consideration for the manner in which the duty was performed. You could have selected no one who has more cause to be proud of the history of your Corps; no one who experiences more pleasure and delight, while tracing its rise and progress; no one who rejoices more over its present flourishing and prosperous condition, nor has stronger hereditary regard for its welfare and perpetuity. If, to recall the days of our boyhood—the scenes of our youth; if, to wander back with memory, and find pleasure in these reminiscences, then, I well know, there are many, very many, in this assembly, whose bosoms swell, as does that of your speaker, with a thousand emotions, which struggle for utterance, and silence would be eloquence. There is perhaps not a father or mother present, who has not associations connected with your Company, of the dearest and holiest character. There is scarcely an old and respected inhabitant of our town, whose name may not be found on your muster rolls, and whose heart does not beat faster, and his blood circulate more quickly, as he hears the sound of your drum and file circling our streets on your days of parade.

Well do I recollect, when a boy, the feelings with which I anticipated the day when I could take a place in the ranks of the Independent Company. With what pleasure my musket was shouldered; and it was with no ordinary satisfaction my name was found on your list of Honorary